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QUOTE OF NOTE:

"If we want the opportunities for undergraduate women, one way to accomplish this is to admit men fulltime."

-Rhona Free, Ph.D.

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ON THE COVER

Steve Kovack, Jr. and Karin Peterson are busy growing all sorts of tasty vegetables and fruits in their year-round Buena Vista Gardens community plots on Cornerstone Drive.

Photo by Lisa Brisson See story page 21

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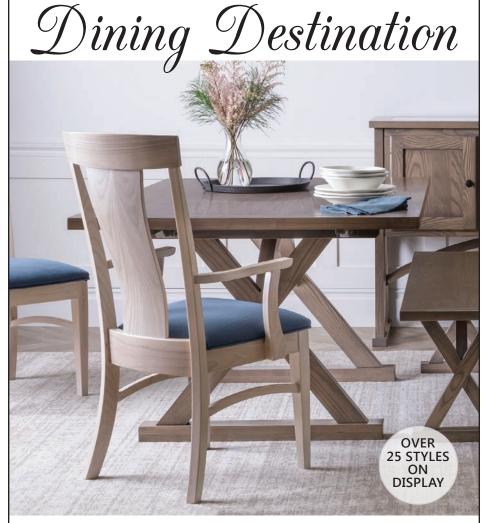
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Artist enjoys challenge of unusual materials

Temporary pieces became Internet sensation by Mara Dresner

Staff Writer

ou might look at the container of Morton salt in your kitchen and think it's something to sprinkle on your French fries or a freshly grilled ear of corn. Brian Owens sees salt as a vehicle for creating art. And he's receiving attention for his work. A lot of attention.

After creating salt images of Heath Ledger as the Joker from "Batman," one of actress Angelina Jolie and a skull, Owens did a salt likeness of the rap artist Drake.

"I posted that one to Instagram and the website Reddit and it got a million views in the first day I posted it. It was kind of my big announcement to the world. I was excited. I was on cloud nine. It was definitely unexpected. I was glowing all day," he said. "It kicked off some media attention. It was definitely overwhelming, but it was recognition that what I was doing was noteworthy."

Owens first started working with salt at the beginning of 2016 after seeing some images online.

"It was kind of a trend I was seeing. I don't know why but barbers were doing it. Salt art is basically just working on dark surfaces, sprinkling

the salt down and maneuvering it," he explained. "I thought it looked fun. It was different. Obviously I hadn't seen anything like it before. For me, it came across as a challenge. I said, 'Yeah these are pretty good. It looks like something I could be good at and possibly something I could be better at.' It wasn't the first time I'd used unusual media. I had used chocolate before. I did a self-portrait in chocolate. One time I did a portrait in incense. I've always liked unusual challenges. It's a fun element to have unexpected appeal to it. You shouldn't be good at pushing around salt artistically."

He said the requirements for creating art with salt are simple.

"I just used basic kitchen salt. I don't think I was concerned with should I be using this salt. The finer the grain, the more detail you can achieve," he explained. "When I first saw portraits [online], one thing did click. I needed a dark surface to work on."

In the house he found he had a card table with a black top.

"It has a kind of slight leathery texture to it. It was actually perfect. The salt grains can nest. It's not as fragile if you bump it; the salt wouldn't disperse," he noted.

His pieces take anywhere from

10 to 20 hours to create.

"I would take pictures of my work and compare them side by side with my reference photo. When I felt I had achieved a likeness, that's when I felt comfortable saying this is done. There's not a lot of pressure deciding when a salt piece is done because it's not going to live very long.

"Occasionally, they get disturbed before they are done. When I was working on Angelina Jolie, I was tuning up a piece of her hair when I brushed through her face with my sleeve," he said. "The salt pieces live maybe a day, maybe two weeks on the table. I try to capture them with pictures, maybe a creative video. None of the salt pieces have been permanent."

One piece he did of Albert Einstein was for an event at the Simsbury Public Library in May 2016. At the end of the day, he took a book about Einstein from the library's shelves and dropped it on the table, destroying the image.

Owens said he's been artistic since childhood. In elementary school in Simsbury, where his parents, Marianne and Peter Owens, still live, he remembers drawing dolphins for his classmates.

"That started it all off. I would

draw these dolphins and I got a very good response from my friends. I constantly got requests for them. Looking back I would probably cringe at them, but it was positive reinforcement, and it kicked it off for me," he recalled. "It was fun to discover the other artists in the class. I've always been pretty competitive with my hobbies. I'd find people who I didn't know were good artists, and say, 'I want to be better than you.' It was a little friendly competition."

Owens still enjoys creating animals, although he mostly does portraiture.

"I don't do very many landscapes. I like giving life to artwork. It kind of puts a new level to it. If you can convey life, I think that's a special thing," he said.

He's also been working on a series of large pastels based on the Seven Deadly Sins.

Over the past couple of years, he's become immersed in his art, inspired in part by other artists on Instagram.

"Instagram has been a huge influence. That's when I got a lot of exposure to other artists in the world. It's a beautiful thing when you can be connected to other artists with a tap of the finger. I started to see a lot of artists with sort of similar styles at

different levels. It pushed me at my technical skills. I started my Instagram page," he said, experimenting in colored pencil drawings, graphite and charcoal. "Then art pages started featuring my work and it grew in momentum."

Owens, who has a degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Delaware, began to reflect on his work in salt and wondering where to take his art.

"It doesn't last physically. I think you could argue it could outlast some of my physical pieces because of the impression it has on audiences. When I destroy it, the heartstrings go up; you destroy something they find beautiful. In that sense, I think it has a greater impact on them. It doesn't have to be physically preserved to be emotionally preserved. With that said, I had a lot of people reaching out, telling me I was crazy for destroying these works. That's where the next stage in my art came about, saying maybe there is a way to preserve these," he explained.

His first attempt at post-production preservation was with a portrait of Bob Marley; he used black paper glued inside of a frame, similar to a shadowbox insert.

"Somebody had suggested a resin material, an epoxy resin. It's like liquid glass."

Despite pouring it on delicately, the piece nearly completely dissolved in the resin. That's what led him to sand,

"I did a self-portrait in chocolate. One time I did a portrait in incense. I've always liked unusual challenges."

-Brian Owens

in the hopes it would not dissolve. His first sand portrait was one of actress Audrey Hepburn.

"When I was planning this, I came across another artist who uses black and white sand. I didn't see any color in his work. When I bought the sand, I bought black sand, gray sand and white sand, and then I added food coloring to some of the white sand, so the red sand comes about before I did the project," he said of Hepburn's bright red lips. "There are four different shades there."

He bought a standard poster frame and used Gorilla Glue to affix the acrylic sheet to the frame to have a shallow box to work with. After he created the portrait within the frame, he poured resin inside the frame. This time, it worked;





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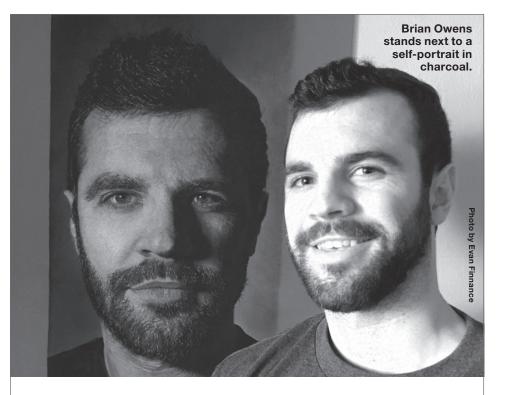


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he had a lasting creation.

Owens said it can take him about half an hour to really "zone in" on a project and then he works as long as he can. He tried listening to podcasts while working but prefers music, anything from '90s alternative rock to rap.

"I have a weakness for rap. It's very strange. I go from one extreme to the other," he said.

He doesn't make a sketch before he starts working.

"When I start with the salt or the sand, I sprinkle a light layer and shape it up free hand. I don't draw anything on the surface. Then I'll take a picture of it and compare it to the original and see where did I not get my proportions right. Once I felt I had a good foundation, then I could get in and really start getting that detail." he said.

All of his works are for sale. He also gets commissions, mostly for color pencil or pencil portraits that are given for gifts.

Owens' work tends to stay with people for a long time.

"I first met Brian in middle school and we graduated high school together in '09. My first knowledge of Brian and his artwork was an in-school art fair I more or less skipped class to attend. Glad I did because I was pretty taken aback at what he was able to do. The particular piece I remember to this day was a one where he made a mechanical crane with the head of a giraffe. I thought it was a really cool concept," said Logan Bernard, who grew up in Simsbury and now lives Boston.

He's been equally impressed with Owens' current work with

unusual materials.

"It's a perfect example of him trying a new avenue and absolutely knocking it out of the park," Bernard said. "He is intensely creative. He takes many different concepts and disciplines and works them out into a picture, etc. Brian always seemed to make something very intricate and difficult look as if he tried his hand at it once and there it was, primed and pressed."

Owens will work in almost any medium, as exhibited by a corporate project he did this year with Jägermeister.

"As a result of my salt work, they asked me to perform four live art performances at their events where I make a very large – six by six foot – rendition of their logo out of spices used in their drink. Again, this work is not permanent, just an exciting attraction for the guests," Owens said. He created works for the company at events in New York City, Las Vegas, Orlando and New Orleans.

He said that creating art serves multiple purposes.

"My motivator has always been growth, self-improvement. But what it really comes down to is in one word, legacy. We're all mortals here; we not going to live on forever. Art is one method of putting yourself in a permanent medium. I want to be remembered through my art. I think that's a fascinating notion," he said. "It really does fulfill me. On a soul level, it makes me happy. I get a rush out of it." WHL

Learn more at instagram.com/ browens_art or contact browensart@ gmail.com.

University to go coed Saint Joseph will begin admitting men in fall 2018

by Mara Dresner

Staff Writer

n 1932, the Sisters of Mercy of Connecticut set out to establish the first liberal arts college for women in the Hartford area. Now the University of Saint Joseph (USJ) is entering a new stage. On June 14, the school's Board of Trustees unanimously agreed that the university's admission process for full-time undergraduate programs will open to all students, beginning in the fall of 2018.

USJ began researching the process of becoming a coeducational institution in November 2016, establishing 12 task force groups in areas such as mission integration, academic programs and consortia, athletics, student life, and academic and administrative support.

Rhona Free, Ph.D., president of USJ, said that although the issue has been discussed in the past, the timing wasn't right until now.

"It is something that has been brought up several times, but there has been too much going on," she noted. "We were launching the School of Pharmacy. Now that the School of Pharmacy is in place and fully accredited and fully enrolled, we could revisit [the issue]. To make a decision like this, you have to have the financial resources to implement it correctly; we do. This is the time to look at it. If we want to expand the opportunities for undergraduate women, one way to accomplish this is to admit men fulltime.

"There are some majors we really wanted to be able to offer to





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undergraduate women but we just didn't have enough students to expand our offerings. One way to get additional enrollment to offer those majors is to admit men," she continued. "Most of our undergraduates are either neutral or in favor of it. Given their responses and the responses of alumni, everything suggested it should be a go."

Some of those majors under consideration are engineering sciences; health sciences, which Free said will help feed students into the physician assistant and pharmacy programs; and digital media.

Men will be able to start the process this fall for admission the following year.

"We do have a lot of male students in our program for adult learners. They could apply and start even sooner, just not as a full-time student," Free said. "For most students it won't be a very big change because we already have a lot of men in undergraduate classes now."

The school is part of the Hartford Consortium for Higher Education, which includes 11 schools in Greater Hartford.

"Students at any one of the campuses [may] take classes at any one of the other campuses," she explained. "Anyone enrolled at another university may want to take a class we offer. Male students take many, many classes we offer already. Male students are living on campus already; they're graduate students; they're in the cafeteria; they're in the library. The experience of our students won't change all that much. It will be a very gradual increase."

The goal for the first year is to bring in about 50 male students. Ultimately, she said, the school would like to have an enrollment of about 900 students, 300 which are men.

'We don't have to make a lot of changes in facilities because we're not looking to bring in a thousand. We can move students around in the residences halls," Free explained, adding that USJ will keep an all-women's dorm.

In addition, men's sports will be added.

Many experienced a number

of emotions when they first learned of the news.

"[I was] a little sad to begin with, but having two daughters in college who would absolutely not consider the school because there were no boys, I realized that the school would need to change. I think college choices have become so competitive that if you're only looking at half of the population, you've decreased your target audience already. Then, many of the young women are not going to choose the school based on the fact that there aren't any men, again decreasing the possible candidate pool. In order to stay competitive and have an acceptable number of incoming students I think coeducation had to happen," said Patricia Gaimari Brennen of Georgia, a 1982 graduate of USJ.

"For those of us who attended the college – it was a college during my years - we were taught the mission and values of the Sisters of Mercy. I am Catholic and have a deep faith and believe in the mission and core values that the university taught. I don't believe that will

change. I have faith in the institution. I am not afraid of the change. They will now be providing a higher education and teaching that faith, mission and core values to young men. I'm encouraged that the men who attend the college will also be taught the value of women. That will be a distinction from other small liberal arts colleges."

Katrina Pytel, a Middletown resident, is a graduate of USJ's nursing program; her daughter, Gwen, is an incoming first-year student in the pre-nursing program. Both attended all-girls high schools prior to enrollment at USJ.

"I was of mixed feelings when I first heard the news. But upon further thought I realized what a great decision this was. All of my professors taught us that this is a global society. We are not limited by anything anymore. Airplanes, trains and ships take us all over the world. We need to embrace and accept those that are different from us, and to me, that includes males. Let's face it; in the working world, we work with as many men as women. Why wait



until that time to learn how the opposite sex thinks and works? Let's bring them into the classroom and start to explore other viewpoints before releasing women into the working world. To me, that's like a leg up. We women now have an idea how you think and how you work. This is an advantage that we can't get from books. I do believe that same-sex education is beneficial, however, in the formative high school years. Once college age, these kids need to learn to interact with one another in the classroom and beyond," Pytel said.

"Gwen was accepted to seven universities, but ultimately chose Saint Joe's, mostly because of the location and smaller size; definitely not because they were women only."

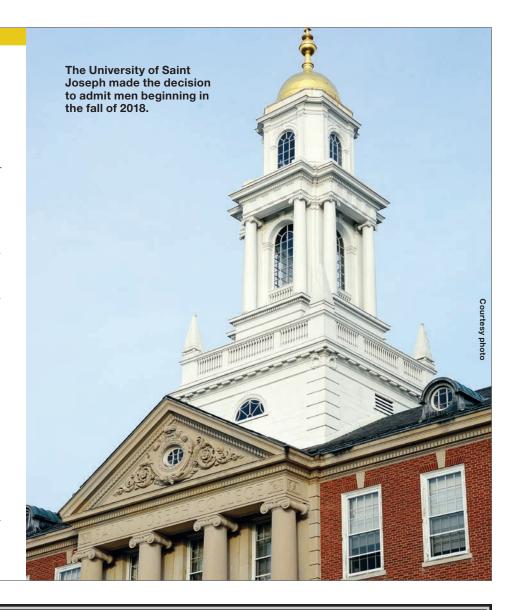
However, not everyone is excited about the change.

Jackie Ozark of West Hartford, a women's studies major, Class of 2020, said she felt "overwhelming disappointment" when she learned of the decision.

"I feel a sense of loss. The admission of men feels intrusive. In an androcentric society, where women are interrupted, out-spoken and over-spoken by men, women's colleges provide women with opportunities to lead and create spaces where women's voices can be heard. USJ has been a reprieve from patriarchy, especially for me as a women's studies major. An integral part of what makes USI so special is that it's a women's college. In admitting men, the university is failing women. It is failing to adhere to its mission," she said. "The admission of men may well increase enrollment, it may garner more money for the school, but that comes at a steep price to women. It comes at the cost of putting profits before women and that is a disappointment."

Susanne Jordan's daughter Jessica is a senior majoring in social work.

"I waited anxiously throughout the spring to hear what decision the University of Saint Joseph would make about admitting men. Being a graduate of an all-women's college in Norton, Massachusetts, that also went coed, I had no doubt in my



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On behalf of the Safe Grad Committee and the Class of 2017, a heartfelt THANK YOU to the following businesses and individuals who supported the 2017 Safe Grad Party on the evening of June 15, 2017. Your financial support and donations made the party a huge success. Thank you to the local businesses who allowed us to put out donation jars and to the community members who generously filled them. And lastly, thank you to everyone who contributed their time and energy to the Safe Graduation Party. Your efforts were greatly appreciated by the Committee and the Graduates.

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mind that USJ would end up making the same decision. Sadly, several weeks ago, we received the news via social media. The school was excited about this decision, felt women should be sharing the classroom with men as they would be in the workforce with men, they felt this decision would allow for greater opportunities for all students and they claimed that the decision was made from a position of financial stability," Jordan, a Wallingford resident, said.

"Having watched my quiet, shy – yet mature – daughter blossom at USJ, I advocate strongly that there is still a place for women's colleges. Studying in an all-female environment validates that young women can do anything that they want and be equally as successful as young men. There are more athletic, student and community leadership opportunities available for women, and I believe closer bonds are formed between professors and students. Having experienced this learning environment myself, I can attest to the fact that [it] is very unique and special, and I do believe that the majority of women choose a women's college because it is single sex. If they would like to experience learning and studying with men, there are a plethora of coed schools available

to them in Connecticut and throughout the country. So it goes without saying that both my daughter and I are very disappointed in USJ's decision, and a decision that seems to be based on input from a small sampling of the USJ community."

Jordan does not believe the decision was made from a place of strength.

"I do not think that admitting men will be a good move for the university. Sadly, I think the decision ultimately just become another small, liberal arts college, of no particular distinction, and just a stone's throw away from other larger, private, coed institutions that are already well-established.

"I am glad that my daughter will graduate while the school is still all women. I feel badly for those girls who are currently freshmen and sophomores and chose the school because it was single sex," she added. "Ultimately, I want to see

"If we want to expand the opportunities for undergraduate women, one way to accomplish this is to admit men fulltime."

-Rhona Free, Ph.D.

was made from a position of financial instability, having watched the school struggle to fill its dorms over the years and to increase their acceptance rate," she said. "I fear the emphasis will be on adding things that appeal to men and not expanding any new opportunities for the young women. Again, I believe the school's niche was being all women and its strong Christian values. Now I am not sure what will attract young men, and even young women, to a school that will

the school succeed, but I was very disappointed with the way the decision was made – my daughter never had an opportunity to share input – and I feel that the school has a very long and difficult road ahead."

Free said that there is a sensitivity to those who came to USJ because it was a single-sex school.

"It's definitely something we will be talking to them about. If they came to Saint Joseph's because they wanted a women's college, what would they like us to do to make sure their experience is what they wanted," she said. "We'll do a lot of faculty and staff development to make sure we provide classrooms that continue to be nurturing for women and also are accommodating for men."

Free is excited about what the change will bring to the university.

"It brings broader diversity of thought and perspective. We know some students are interested only in a coeducational environment; we can bring in those women and as well as men. With an increased enrollment we can offer more opportunities for undergraduate majors as well as co-curricular activities, clubs, events; we can expand the type of things students can do while they're on campus," she said.

One thing that will not change is the foundation that was started in 1932.

"On campus there is still a strong sense of commitment to social justice, to ethics, to developing values," she said. "The Sisters of Mercy left an imprint and continue to have a presence. We talk about ethics and values and compassionate service. We have students who are here because of that. It's really a defining feature of the institution."

Learn more at usj.edu.





Empowering patients

Health coach helps people make sense of their conditions

by Alicia B. Smith

Associate Editor

nne Koneru was going to be a lawyer.

In the midst of her tenure as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Amazon of Ecuador, she had a change of heart. Here she was helping women learn to make hydration salts at home or assisting farmers with foot care. It was then she knew she would follow the many nurses in her family and join the profession.

She earned her nursing degree from the University of Miami and continued there for her master's in nursing, having already earned an undergraduate degree in history and ethnic studies. She went on to work with Donna Shalala, former secretary of health under President Bill Clinton, where the two taught a course on public health policy.

"I worked with her as an assistant and learned how complicated our health care system is," Koneru said.

Koneru has an even better understanding now as part of the work she does with the Hartford-based Malta House of Care, which provides free medical care to those without insurance.

In her role as a health coach, Koneru has patients who are referred to her from Malta House of Care doctors. She works with them one on one to help them better understand their doctors' instructions, the appropriate ways to take their medications, suggestions on how to further better their health and more.





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"I am so blessed to be in this position," the West Hartford resident said. "It's really an innovative and forward-thinking approach to promoting transformative health care."

Much of the work she does simply comes because of the limited amount of time a patient has with a doctor; they can leave with unanswered questions or uncertainty about what they were told. It is Koneru's job to help answer questions and have patients gain a better understanding of their condition and how it should be treated.

"It's really going to change how we talk about health care," Koneru said. "It's putting patients in charge of their health."

Malta House Executive Director Michelle Murphy said, "We know from research more than half the people who leave the doctor, insured or uninsured, don't know what the doctor just told them. They can take a prescription and fill it, [but] may not understand or feel overwhelmed by advice from the doctor or not know how to make day-to-day changes in their life. That is where

the coach comes in."

A grant by the Boehringer Ingelheim Cares Foundation allowed Koneru, who is bilingual in English and Spanish, to join the staff in April. The first grant BI offered funded a health coach for Americares Free Clinics based in Danbury.

of their lives is that they feel they do not have time in their day or do not know where to begin.

Many of the patients who receive care through Malta House are those who are struggling to make ends meet - they may be working two jobs and are trying to

"I help them know the ideal and what is possible. It leads to better outcomes." -Anne Koneru

Already in her short time with the agency, Koneru has seen improvements with some of the patients such as better blood pressure or lower cholesterol levels.

Koneru explained that all patients at one time or another have heard about the importance of exercise or how many servings of fruits and vegetables they should have each day. What often hinders them from adopting these missives as part balance work with responsibilities at home. They may wonder when in the day are they supposed to find 30 minutes to exercise.

That is where Koneru can help. She will help a patient develop a plan, sharing simple changes they can make that will have a big impact on their health.

"I help them know the ideal and what is possible," Koneru said. "It leads to better outcomes."

In some instances it might be Koneru steering a diabetic towards using stevia, a natural plant-based sweetener, rather than a processed one or swapping barley for rice. Other suggestions might be parking further away from work and walking the rest of the way, this might be a 10-minute walk in the morning and a 10-minute walk in the afternoon, which adds up.

"It's getting down to the specifics, which no one has time for with a typical medical appointment," Koneru said.

Dr. Theresa Caputo, one of the physicians at Malta House of Care, often refers her patients to Koneru.

"Patients have a sense of empowerment coming in to see Anne," she said, adding that when they make an appointment with Koneru they are making a commitment to improve their health. "I think that makes a huge difference," she said of the one-on-one sessions.

Malta House of Care's medical van parks in four locations throughout the Hartford area. Those in need of care are taken on a first-come,

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first-served basis. The van has two fully operational exam rooms. Some medical tests can be conducted on-site. The program has a small paid staff consisting of nurses and doctors, as well as several volunteer doctors, nurses and medical professionals. It serves Connecticut residents who are 18 or older and have no health insurance.

Malta House of Care was founded in 2006 and is funded through donations. It partners with area health agencies such as Hartford and Saint Francis hospitals, and has provided 41,314 services to patients.

There is no telling how many people may show up for treatment when the mobile medical clinic pulls into one of the four churches – The Cathedral of Saint Joseph, St. Peter's Church and St. Augustine's, all in Hartford, and St. Rose's Church in East Hartford – one afternoon each per week. It is not uncommon to have 20 to 25 patients come for care on any given day.

If Caputo recommends a patient set up an appointment with Koneru, they are more likely to do so than if Koneru herself approached them and offered to help. Many patients know Caputo and trust her judgment.

Initially Koneru was concerned that patients would not be interested in working with a health coach, but they are more open to the idea than she expected.

"There's something therapeutic in being heard," she said.

Koneru said, too, that she views all of her patients as experts on themselves

An appointment typically consists of talking about standard medical care, such as learning what medications they have been prescribed, why and the appropriate way to take them. The discussion will then turn to things such as eating habits or other behavior that may impact health. Koneru will also spend time discussing their illness, which in many cases is a chronic condition, and what its impact is on the body. Finally, Koneru will work on offering suggestions for positive changes.

"It's the follow-up visits, they open up more," Koneru said.

The grant enabled Koneru to purchase materials to help her explain certain conditions. Before



Easy-to-grow herbs include mint, spearmint and peppermint, says Anne Koneru.

she would have to hand draw arteries to explain what plaque is and why it is bad or what high glucose levels do to arteries. Now she has models she can show patients so they understand better what is going on inside their bodies.

"That really has been amazing to have those tools," Koneru said.

Caputo said the concept of a health coach is catching on and has gained traction in California.

"It's important we make that connection in person," she said.

As she settles into her role, Koneru has begun planning to share some

demonstrations during the van visits and has created informational posters.

Those who do not have health insurance are more likely not to seek medical care from a practitioner, often leading them to hold off important treatments, which could mean they need more care when they finally get help or they end up in the emergency room.

"We know when patients don't have insurance for a period of time, there are health conditions that can be managed with little cost, a few years later the cost grows exponentially," Koneru said. **WHL**





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England-inspired fine dining cuisine featured at Millwright's Restaurant in Simsbury and award-winning pit barbecue by Jamie McDonald come together at Cook and The Bear, which opened in Blue Back Square where The Counter

Their collaboration has been fine tuned Monday nights at Millwrights where the menu was a pop-up for the past year while setbacks delayed the restaurant from opening.

The menu is creative, and even healthy if you want it to be.

"I would say 75 percent of our menu is gluten free and 50 percent of our menu is vegetarian. It's not what you would expect," Anderson said, noting, "You can come and you can eat protein and vegetables; they'll be served fresh."

You can also be sinful if you choose.

"You can have all the brisket, and macaroni and cheese you want, and biscuits," he said.

What you can't get is what most barbecue places serve - scoop-andserve food that's been sitting on a steam table, ready to go.

"Here we're cooking everything back there fresh," Anderson said. "More than 75 percent of our kitchen equipment is wood fired, so we'll be cooking over wood and charcoal really imparting those flavors into not only meats but vegetables, too."

and is one of the best in the country, Anderson said. "You're going to see a lot of fun, inventive drinks – both alcoholic and nonalcoholic. There's a big health component here, believe it or not "

There will be fresh juices and vegetable-based cocktails that come both with and without alcohol.

The corner spot at 50 Memorial Road, with windows on two sides, has been given the feeling of a picnic thanks to such details as a red-andwhite tablecloth pattern on the walls, stacks of wood and a garage door that when open lets the outside in.

It's casual and fun.

Anderson and McDonald are co-owners. Not wanting to be the chef of several restaurants, they hired Ed Jones to be the executive chef. They'd met while participating in area events and hit it off.

"We're doing casual food, but it's chef-driven," Anderson said. "We wanted to find someone with a good skill set to run the kitchen."

"When Tyler approached me about working with him at the Cook and The Bear, I was at a point where I was feeling like I needed a change after being chef at Firebox. I was at a point where I needed a break, to take a step back and reset," Jones said. "When you're in a position of chef rather than cook, and you get to make the choices about the cuisine, you really find out what you're most interested in doing. What you like to do, not just what you've learned from

that I like taking all of the fine dining techniques I had learned, and putting them into food that was much more accessible to guests.

"So a casual concept, especially working with Tyler, a smoker, wood fire, charcoal - all of that - really, really appeals to me, so I can have the best of both worlds. It's a menu and a cuisine that feels a lot more comfortable to me than doing fine dining."

A former graphic designer, Jones moved here to be closer to family. The only job he could get was as a chef at Ann Howard Apricots. For six months, he said, he hated cooking, but once he stopped fighting it, "it ended up being something I didn't even know I wanted to do or would enjoy."

Anderson added, "We didn't all start cooking because we wanted to. We started cooking because it was a job and we needed money."

"Many of us start by not liking the job," Jones said.

"It's the worst and the best job in the world," Anderson said.

Chefs have a strong desire to please customers.

"We're taking the techniques and the products and the attention to detail that we use at Millwrights," but then making it more accessible to everyone, Anderson explained. "We're creating a casual restaurant here that we want to appeal to the greatest amount of people. We wanted a very fun restaurant."

"At the end of the day, we want people to come here and have fun,"

"I would say 75 percent of our menu is gluten free and 50 percent of our menu is vegetarian. It's not what you would expect."

-Tyler Anderson

Jones said.

Anderson said, "I feel like a lot of barbecue restaurants, traditionally, appeal to males because it used to be that animal fats were bad, so men would go and just get this huge, heaping plate of barbecue and that's amazing and delicious, but we wanted to make a barbecue restaurant that appealed to everyone."

Among the items on the barbecue-inspired menu are pulled Berkshire pork, pastrami tacos with pineapple mustard, St. Louis spareribs and a "Rodeo" burger with cheesy barbecue sauce.

Talking about his love for food, Anderson recalled, "When I fell in love with food is when I ate at a restaurant called the French Laundry in 1999 in Napa Valley and Thomas Keller was cooking there. I was a cook at the time, but I wasn't in love with food yet. My aunt took

me and I fell in love with it then. That's when I realized food could take you to another place; food could change your emotion and make you happy; and I think those of us who are in this industry, we kind of live to make people happy. So the ability to do a craft that makes people happy was what made me fall in love with food.

"The quintessential dish that I ate that day was a dish called Oysters and Pearls, which is Thomas Keller's signature dish which completely changed my mind about how I looked at being a cook. ... That one dish is what made me realize that this is what I want to do for the rest of my life."

Jones described large family gatherings in the small home of his Italian grandmother who made big meals of antipasti and braciole.

"That was always memorable. The food was always good and I always loved food. It was more about the community and the entertainment and the gathering for me."

A meal he called a mind blowing was the first time he ate at WD-50, an avant garde experimental restau-

"At the end of the day, we want people to come here and have fun."

-Ed Jones

rant in New York City that The New York Times called "one of the most influential restaurants in the world."

"The chef did things that nobody had ever seen before," Jones said, adding, "For the most part, I like places like this. I like cheesesteak and hoagies and hot dogs and momand-pop places that do it really well."

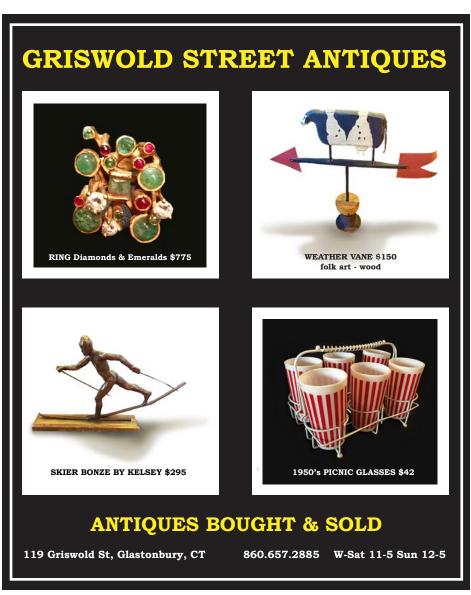
While the restaurant will be family friendly, it's large bar area and cocktail program will cater to the late-night crowd that gathers in the Center.

In addition to lunch and dinner, Sunday brunch will also be served.

"When you have great biscuits and brisket, you put an egg on top of that with some hollandaise and you've got the best eggs benedict ever," Anderson said. WHL







Co-owner and **Executive Chef Tyler Anderson** answered some questions offering more insight on his personality and know-how.



Q: What's your "secret weapon" ingredient?

A: Lemon juice. I use lemon juice in 80 percent of the things I cook.

Q: What's your least favorite food?

A: Sea urchin roe – it's very popular; chefs love it; they use it all the time, but I think it's gross and overrated.

Q: What is the one cooking technique that everyone should know how to do?

A: To properly season, to use enough salt. I think home cooks a lot of times get scared of using salt, and then they go to a restaurant and go, "Wow, the restaurant food is so good." It's because we use more salt than you do.

Q: If you could take any celebrity chef out to dinner, who would it be and where would you take them?

A: I would take Emeril Lagasse to Millwrights because he was one of my inspirations for becoming a chef, and he's an awesome guy.

Q: What is your favorite cookbook?

A: "The French Laundry Cookbook." It was an inspiration.

Q: What herb or spice best describes your personality?

A: Cilantro, because most people like me, but those who don't really don't.

Q: If you weren't a chef, what profession would you be in?

A: I'd be a farmer.

Q: What's your "go to" staple dish?

A: I don't have one. It's all over the place.

Q: What do you like to cook when having guests to your home?

A: Same [as Ed Jones' answer].

Q: It's your last meal on earth. What's on your plate?

A: Mine would be dinner at Blue Hill at Stone Barns with my fiancé, because it would be really long and drawn out, like five hours long.



Exectutive Chef Ed Jones answered some questions offering more insight on his personality and know-how.

Q: What's your "secret weapon" ingredient?

Q: What's your least favorite food?

Q: What is the one cooking technique that everyone should know how to do?

Q: If you could take any celebrity chef out to dinner, who would it be and where would you take them?

- then cook together.

Q: What is your favorite cookbook?

Q: If you weren't a chef, what profession would you be in?

A: Graphic design, painting or silk screening. It was the first

Q: What do you like to cook when having guests to your home?

Q: It's your last meal on earth. What's on your plate?

A: I would have what I said I would cook for guests or an

Story told with satire

Local author reacts to election results with a book

by Alicia B. Smith

Associate Editor

atherine Coughlin always wrote poems for fun. One night in particular she was inspired to

"That night, holding my baby in my arms, I was feeling sad," she said.

That night was November 8, 2016, Election Day.

As the results came in, Coughlin was surprised, expecting a different outcome.

For the early results, Coughlin said she sat in her home, holding her daughter, who was wearing a white pantsuit, similar to the ones worn by presidential candidate, and the first female candidate for a major party, Hilary Clinton. Her daughter was adorned with the "I Voted" sticker her mother had received after casting her ballot earlier that day.

Coughlin went to bed before the final results were in and learned the actual results when she got up at 2 a.m. to feed her daughter, who was 3 ½ months

old at the time. In her mind began to swirl a number of ideas and phrases, and soon she began to focus on the thought she may have a children's book. What came out of all her thoughts was "Once Upon a Time When America Was Great."

The story is one for adults and children, sharing a message of hope. It ends with, "For kindness, acceptance, and love always trump hate. And here in America it is never too late to make this place great."

Coughlin first sold the book at her booth at the Made in Connecticut Expo held this spring in Farmington. The book drew an audience of curious people, many who did not agree with her book's sentiment, but did agree that she had the right to her thoughts and that the message was important regardless of political leanings. (The book's Trump-like character is described as "a big orange beast, whose thoughts and ideas, were mean to say the least.")

She said she sold 50 books at the expo to those "on both sides of the aisle."









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Coughlin's illustrator, Randall Bessette, is a friend of her husband.

"It was a therapeutic process for both of us," Coughlin said of putting the book together.

The book was a process that "came together with imagery of darkness and light," Coughlin said.

"The thing that hit me the most was the feeling of powerlessness. Not having something to do about it is unacceptable," Bessette said. "This may not sway anyone, it is my art expressing my opinion."

This is Coughlin's first book. She self-published it using CreateSpace and it became real to her when she received the first batch of glossy books.

She also appreciated meeting readers in person.

"It was really neat to see it as a tangible thing," Bessette said, adding that putting the illustrations together was a lot of work.

"It is a polarizing issue," Coughlin said. "It was interesting talking from both sides."

Bessette said the experience was interesting for him as well, recalling one man, a veteran, who walked over to their booth and said the way the president was depicted was "offensive," however, he told Bessette "I like the way you are expressing your art" and that the book made him feel patriotic.

Coughlin said the experience made her realize that despite the differing of opinions, "it's nice to remember people can still be civil," she said.

The book was written and illustrated in the immediate aftermath of the election as she went through a series of emotional peaks and crashes

"They are thinking of their future and how they can get involved," Coughlin said.

"The world will, ultimately, be a better place because of it, I am hopeful," for the future, she said.

Part of her hopefulness is because recent events will be an inspiration for more people to get out and vote.

"I always voted," she said. "I turned 18 on a presidential election year, I remember staying up" for the

"I think this is a book for all ages, but it's in a children's style."

-Katherine Coughlin

while working on her story.

Bessette said his challenge was keeping up with the ever-changing news cycle. For example, there was a time when then President Trump advisor Rudy Giuliani was being considered for a post in the new administration, and that quickly changed.

"I think this is a book for all ages, but it's in a children's style," Coughlin said.

What she has observed in the last several months is that the election inspired more younger individuals to pay more attention to politics. results, she said.

That was 2000, the "hanging chad" year.

Following the 2016 election, Coughlin said she was inspired to do more than just vote and started making calls to legislative representatives. She said she also recognized the importance of voting in local elections, not just national ones.

"Protesting has its value," she said.
"You can do more work locally."

Bessette, too, has been voting each year he has been eligible and has con-

tinued to have conversations with anyone including getting into arguments with those who voted for the Green Party candidate.

"The primary was so crazy," Bessette said.

An art teacher who lives in Holyoke, Massachusetts, he has noticed his students talking about current events more. The book, he said, can be a way to teach the important lesson of learning right from wrong.

His daughter, who was 11 at the time, was devastated by the election results. The next day she went to school with teardrops drawn on her face and the word "why" written on her cheek.

"There was no good way to explain this to her," Bessette said. "The upside, my daughter is really interested in feminism."

Coughlin grew up in Storrs and attended the University of Connecticut, earning a degree in mechanical engineering. She moved to West Hartford following graduation.

While she has always written poems throughout her life, Coughlin said she was not a big reader until recently and has begun to share the pleasure of reading with her daughter. **WHL**







teve Kovack Jr. is a master gardener, a farmer and the individual the other gardeners in the year-round portion of the Buena Vista Gardens turn to for everything from tips to tools.

"I have three green thumbs," he said.

"Gardening can take place all four seasons," Kovack said.

Several years ago, he and about half a dozen other gardeners who felt the same way petitioned the town to be allowed to access their space all 12 months.

"We all knew each other and we all wanted a year-round garden. We were petitioning for two years,"

Doug Jackson, Westmoor Park naturalist, granted the request, designating one end of the rectangular space on Cornerstone Drive to remain undisturbed by the town, which rototills the three community gardens and stakes out plots every

"They approached me with a variety of benefits," he said.

Among them were an extended

growing period and the ability to plant berries, asparagus, spring bulbs, herbs and perennials. The gardeners agreed to maintain the area themselves.

Praising their sense of cooperation, Jackson agreed that a tighter community could be formed as this group shared their knowledge and resources.

Among the 13 gardeners are a retired restaurateur, an archeologist, a fitness professional, salespersons and a chef.

Many had gardened together for years before choosing to be in the year-round section that is enclosed by a seven-foot tall heavy-duty deer fence they financed, and Kovack and Helmut Goetz installed. Before it went up, most gardeners put up fencing around their individual plots that they then had to remove every fall.

Kovack mows the paths and puts out buckets to collect the stones people dig out of the dirt. He will rototill plots at gardeners' request.

Those who wanted raised beds can have them, and trellises and other garden decorations can stay up vear-round.

"We have to keep it clean and neat looking," he said.

The fenced area was enlarged once, doubling the space to include nine more plots. Although gardeners on the other side have asked to have it further extended, Kovack said he's not prepared to take on the job.

He estimated that he spends 20 hours a week in the garden. It's his place to relax as well as socialize. The back of his van – which he no longer parks on the road because of the damage golf balls have done to vehicles - contains "every tool imaginable" that he graciously lends.

Everyone shares a 100-foot hose. "There are a lot of people now growing perennials," Kovack said.

In the plots he tends, he's planted raspberries, strawberries, lavender, asparagus, iris and golden alyssum. He grows winter rye to cover and replenish the soil.

"I grow everything from seeds," said Kovack, who was raised on a farm in Pennsylvania and tended a garden about the size of the entire community garden space. "I experiment all the time with my seeds. I try to do something different all the time. I grow everything from

standard vegetables to unusual flowers ... [and] a lot of Chinese vegetables."

Eggplant, however, will not grow in the sandy, loamy soil.

Along with flowers and berries, a sense of community grew strong once the fence enclosed the area.

"Andy [Barra] was very adamant about making this a real community garden, which is what they should have," Kovack said.

Together they came up with the idea for a seating area.

"One of the people within this fenced area generously rented a plot that was not claimed and asked me to flip, which I did, so the extra plot is right in the middle of the first row and that has become our party pavilion," said Karin Peterson, who serves as a secretary for the group, dispersing information to everyone as needed.

It instantly became the focal point and a gathering spot. There's a table and many chairs that are often occupied and a small grill that's rarely used. You will see gardeners sitting there sipping a beverage, chatting with other gardeners or reading.

"I live in a condo. Because I have





Helmut Goetz and Karin Peterson hunt for raspberries together.

The year-round community garden is alive and well and growing each day at Buena Vista Gardens

no yard, I can go over there, take coffee, paper and book and I will sit for an hour after I work in my garden. ... I'll also do it in the evening. It really enriches my life," Peterson said. "I just go because I like to get dirty. I used to work as an archeologist and I love fresh tomatoes. Planting, pulling weeds, it's all Zen. It's so relaxing. It's meditative."

Grateful for all Kovack does, she said, "Steve is there the most. He acts as a resource for all of us. He's the common thread."

Kovack would like to see more people gardening and more community gardens in town.

"Every community garden should have a gazebo, a place to sit, a place to rest. Yes. This way here,

we share our knowledge, we share our company, we share our food and that's what community gardens are supposed to be," he said. "It might be raining; you don't want to leave the garden yet; you sit down here and think about things until the rain stops. You just sit here and think about things."

He said members of the group share their philosophy on life and talk about many different things.

"Lately it's been a lot of politics," he added, calling everyone progressive.

To celebrate the first year of the gazebo, Peterson organized an old-fashioned harvest festival with a potluck dinner after Labor Day. It was so successful, she organized a

second one.

"That was so popular now we're doing a second one in the spring," she said.

"I look forward to our two seasonal get-togethers in the gazebo," said Beany Tierney who has been gardening for nine years.

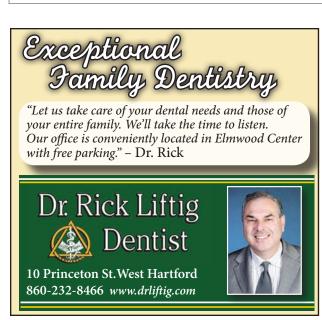
"We have become a real community and I always tell everyone that my garden is my happy place and the friends I garden along side of are a big part of the happy," said Karen Hartford, who has been gardening at Buena Vista for the last 15 years.

"I have always been interested in the no-till method of gardening and was thrilled when the opportunity came along to be a part of the

group that is now able to garden that way. I am now able to grow many herbs that winter over as well as garlic which you plant in the fall, and berries, too," she said.

"Having the fence enclosing our end of the garden and the gazebo has really made our garden area seem like an oasis. Because each individual garden is not enclosed it makes for easy communication with your neighbors. We all compare notes about our gardens, are interested in learning about what each other is planting and always go to Steve for our questions about growing our plants."

"The year-round section allows me to wait to harvest some of my produce until December," said













Beany Tierney has her own portion of the community garden marked with a personalized sign.

Barbara Riihimaki. "For example, the last two years, I was able to grow a fall crop of arugula and lettuce, and picked carrots and beets close to January 1 when a hard frost was predicted."

She said, "Having a garden requires constant maintenance to get the best results, but the taste of fresh produce cannot be beat. If you have freezer space, preserving your homegrown produce is a wonderful way to experience healthy food throughout the year."

Some gardeners, she added, donate extra produce to food pantries and soup kitchens in Hartford.

Not having enough space to garden where she lives to drew

Elizabeth Pezda to the Buena Vista Community Gardens.

"In the short two seasons at the gardens, I have met many wonderful people – seasoned gardeners and beginners like me. In my experience, the community gardens bring together many like-minded people who love nature and who are very willing to share their gardening knowledge and experiences, occasionally seeds, and at times a friendly ear to a totally unrelated gardening topic," she said.

"People know who's here," Kovak said, adding that gardeners watch out for one another and report anything suspicious to the police.

If a space look untended, other

gardeners offer to help. Last year when Kovak had back surgery, others weeded his garden.

"Gardeners all have different perspectives on what and where they plant in their plots. I learn a great deal from other gardeners and many a great recipe has been passed along to me," said Kathy Janis, who continued to cultivate the plot her late husband began 20 years ago.

She is a member of the West Hartford Garden Club – along with Kovack who is the only male member.

"Our community garden will be one of the gardens that will be showcased June 16, 2018 as part of the West Hartford Garden Club garden tour," Janis said. **WHL** "In my experience, the community gardens bring together many like-minded people who love nature and who are very willing to share their gardening knowledge and experiences."

- Elizabeth Pezda









Happy birthday

103 years young and still celebrating

by Alicia B. Smith

Associate Editor

or many years now, Barbara Martell Rogers Conant has been saying that she does not believe she will live to see another birthday. Fate had other plans, for on July 7, 2017 she celebrated her 103rd year.

There was cake, balloons, gifts and flowers. Most importantly her family her children, their spouses and a granddaughter - came to visit. Several of her neighbors stopped in for cake and ice cream, and to wish her well. A few days later, more family would come to fete her and keep the good times going.

"Are you behaving over there," one of her neighbors at The Reservoir wanted to know at the first party. The comment drew a big smile from Conant, who, of course was behaving herself.

"You have a hell of a nerve getting older," the neighbor informed her, which brought a laugh to all those who heard.

"Let's not talk about my age," Conant said.

However, it is tough not to talk about her age. She was born in 1914, just days after the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand that would lead to the start of World War I and a few days from the major league debut of Babe Ruth with the Boston Red Sox, and about a month and a half before the Panama Canal was inaugurated.

"I have always said that the years I grew up living next door to the Quincy beach rowing a dory day after day, strengthened me, especially as I was asthmatic and survived diphtheria. I don't really know why I am still here now," Conant said of her longevity.









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Years later, she was at the circus watching her stepmother's nieces perform as part of the Great Wallendas on July 6, 1944 - the day of the Hartford Circus Fire. All of her family managed to escape the blaze and ensuing chaos, and watched the fire from their car.

Not everyday of Conant's life was as exciting and scary as the day of the circus fire, but as her family knows, she has had a great life filled with love and fun.

"I did not have an easy life but I got through it by sheer grit," Conant said. "That is what my dad taught me, not by words but by example."

Among the biggest changes she has witnessed throughout her life relate to the friendships created in the neighborhood where she grew up and technology.

"When I was growing up we knew all of our neighbors," she said. "There was a clubhouse across the street where the neighborhood women went to get together and play cards or sew. We would play games together in the evening. There was no TV, internet or cell phone. I never learned to type, have never been on the internet or had a cell phone."

Her daughter, Carole B. C. Fox, youngest son, Douglas Conant, and granddaughter, Stephanie C. Fox, J.D., have written a biography of the centenarian in their lives.

Among the details they shared was that Barbara was born in Quincy, Massachusetts, and was the youngest child of Elmer Rogers and Matilda Martell Rogers. She had two older brothers. Her mother passed away during the Spanish influenza pandemic of 1916. Barbara was just 2 years old. Her father would later marry Katherine Donahue.

Conant went on to study nursing at Peter Breck Brigham Hospital in Boston.

She came to Connecticut as an aide to a Mrs. Hollander. Within weeks, the woman died at home and Ahern Funeral Home sent a team to the house. Among them was Leonard Joseph Conant, who met Barbara for the first time. The very new widower noticed the attraction of the two

and encouraged their courting. Mr. Hollander would later gift them some furniture when they married in 1939.

The couple had three children: Rogers, Carole and Douglas. They first lived in Hartford before moving to Gifford Road in West Hartford, eventually settling on Lostbrook Road.

Conant is proud of her brother, Elmer Rogers Jr., who became a lieutenant general in the Air Force, was one of the first of three pilots to fly for the U.S. Army-Air Corps, and survived three plane crashes during World War II. He landed a role in the 1927 silent film "Wings," because he could do rolling spirals and the movie's pilot could not.

After her husband died in 1981, Conant took up nursing again, this time as a home health care nurse. Following her retirement, she volunteered at Hartford Hospital, working at its Jefferson Street gift shop as well as the one in the hospital. She is recognized for her work on a plaque hanging in the hospital's lobby.

Conant lived in her home on

Lostbrook Road with her son, Douglas, until a harrowing bout with bronchitis prompted her to move to The Reservoir; she was 101.

A steady diet of fruits and vegetables, including a colorful salad each day, are things her granddaughter, Stephanie C. Fox, credits with keeping Conant healthy all these years. That, and she did not drink alcohol, never smoked and rarely partook of caffeine.

"She is beautiful," Stephanie said. "[She] has always had an excellent memory, she got me addicted to puzzles such as crosswords, loves dogs and cats, and accepts things as they are rather than as she might wish them to be. She doesn't constantly find fault with people. She tells family history stories over and over again, which makes it easy to memorize them. She is also far more interesting and much tougher than she gives herself credit for being."

One of the stories Stephanie likes to tell, and has become one of Fox's favorites, is how her great-uncle, Elmer Jr., the pilot, had come home for a visit.



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"The looks on the faces of those people were worth it," Fox said.

'The interesting part to me was that he buzzed Heron Road and all the neighbors and his parents came out to wave at them," added Carole. "I can still picture it in my mind – him in his goggles, leather cap and scarf blowing in the wind, our Mom hanging on for dear life."

Stephanie said that her grandmother's favorite pets were the dogs she had over the years. She also had a rat that a boyfriend gave her. At one time, when she walked her dogs, her cats would follow along behind, Stephanie said.

Drawing was something Conant enjoyed and was self-taught. An image she drew of a cat smoking a cigarette hangs in her room at The Reservoir.

Carole said that one of the many qualities she admires about her mother is that "she is a survivor."

"She taught me to always keep going

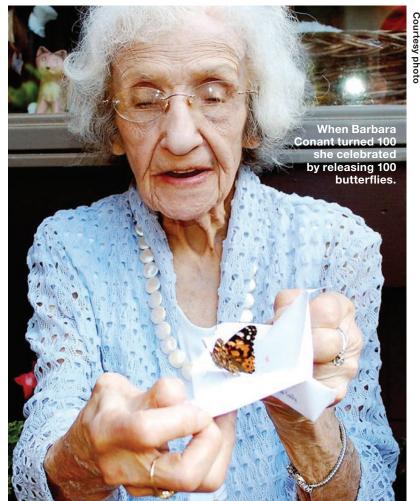
no matter how difficult life's circumstances," Carole said, adding that her mother cared for her father during his bout with prostate cancer.

"Throughout that time Mom worked tirelessly as a home care nurse," said Carole, who followed in her mother's footsteps and became a nurse. While working at Hartford HealthCare, from which she retired, she would walk over to the hospital gift shop on Jefferson Street to visit with her mother, who was volunteering.

Carole treasures the brown-andyellow checked crocheted blanket that her mother made for her for naptime when she was in kindergarten at Smith School.

"Of course my favorite story about mom is sitting on the stoop outside our front door on Gifford Road while she made a red corduroy dress for my baby doll – the one with the beautiful blue eyes and blonde hair. We all have brown eves and were brunettes, except my Dad who had blue eyes," Carole said.

She also appreciated how her mother took apart one of her own dresses and used the material to made her a skirt and jacket to wear to school. WHL

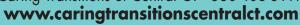




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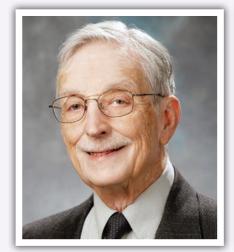


he 60 Over 60 award was created by Duncaster as a way to showcase the lives of people 60 or better, who continue to have a unique impact on their world. The LifeCare Community in Bloomfield began its search January 1, receiving nominations from throughout Connecticut.

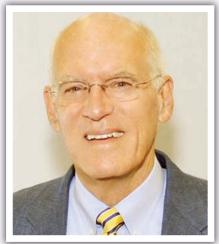
"We've all heard of 40 Under 40 awards that highlight the successes of this group of people. We thought it was high time to recognize the ongoing inspiration and achievement of those 60 or better. We were delighted with the response to it," said Carol Ann McCormick, vice president of sales and marketing at Duncaster. "Clearly there are many people who wanted to recognize people 60 or better for their continued accomplishments."

This is the first year the awards have been presented. Here are the nine recipients who live in West Hartford. They were celebrated at a reception at the facility.

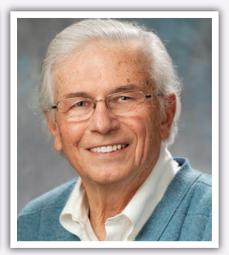
Nine West Hartford residents recognized for their accomplishments



Quincy Abbot is a national advocate for those with development disabilities. He became a volunteer leader with ARC Connecticut and later was drafted to fill an advocacy position on a national level. He co-chaired the steering committee for Money Follows the Person, providing reforms to and deinstitutionalization of Connecticut's longterm care system.



Robert Cave is touted as a leader, helper and joiner. He took the helm at the West Hartford Seniors Job Bank, a nonprofit dedicated to helping seniors in the Greater Hartford area, and made it a financial success.



David Murphy is a change agent to the fishermen of Haiti. He developed a prefabricated catamaran kit, with a unique design allowing a buildout in days instead of months. The boat is safer to take into deeper waters allowing access to larger quantities of fish and giving birth to a sustainable boat-building industry in Haiti.



Reathie Bailey known as Mother Bailey at The First Cathedral in Bloomfield, has a keen interest in health and wellness, which led to the establishment of The Good Life Wellness Center. The products in the center offer a balance between nutritional wellness and weightloss management, and Bailey's involvement led to many certifications and recognitions.



Billie M. Levy is a children's book advocate and with her donation of children's texts to the University of Connecticut, formed the Billie M. Levy Literature Collection of Illustrated Children's Books. She formed this library with 8,000 books and the collection has grown to over 15.000 volumes.



Roberta Prescott sets the bar high for female entrepreneurs. She is a national authority on communication, founded The Prescott Group and is the President of International Women's Forum, Connecticut. She has spoken to groups as diverse as the National Foundation of Women Legislators and the American Society for Training and Development.



Marcy Stabile was nominated for her presence as a quiet hero. She has been a calming support to friends facing serious illness and has even been there to ease their dying. She is an active member of her synagogue and in the words of her nominator is "a treasure to her family and friends."



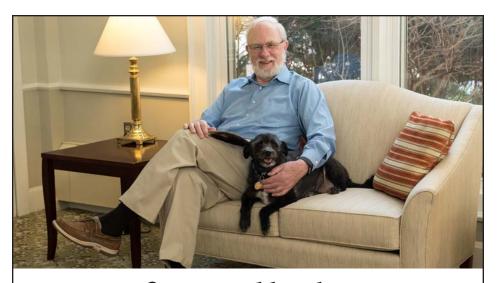
Melinda Trummel champions equal footing for all, dedicating much of her life promoting fair treatment and social justice. Her activism started at a lunch counter in Kansas, took her through Vietnam War protests and eventually to the League of Women Voters. She is an active participant in the Wadsworth Atheneum Museum of Art's reading programs for children in Hartford schools.



Joan Walden is a writer, volunteer, professor and organizer. She is on the faculty of Central Connecticut College and also teaches at Tunxis Community College. She is the president of the West Hartford chapter of Toastmasters International. Walden also heads up and publicizes the work of Kehilat Chavarim Jewish Community, an independent "community of friends" who study and investigate their Jewish heritage. Since 1996, she has been teaching fitness classes at several area clubs and facilities including the Mandell JCC. WHL

"Clearly there are many people who wanted to recognize people 60 or better for their continued accomplishments."

> - Carol Ann **McCormick**



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Slice o photos by Lisa Brisson

For more photos and full coverage of this beloved local event, see the July 27 edition of our sister publication The West Hartford Press.









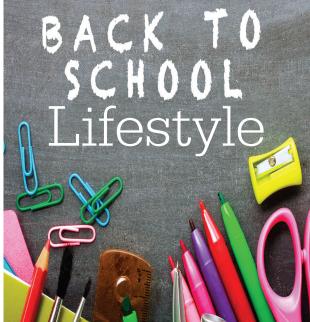
Letting out their best 'Om'

An estimated more than 2,000 people came out Saturday, July 22 for the annual Yoga on LaSalle event for which LaSalle Road is closed and taken over by yoga practitioners of all levels. 1. The 75-minute class took participants through a variety of poses in the street as their yoga mats brought pops of color to West Hartford Center.

2. The class was led by West Hartford Yoga director Barbara Ruzansky and assisted by instructors from other area studios. West Hartford Yoga was the sponsor of the event. 3. Hands on Drumming provided live music for the annual event. 4. Yoga enthusiasts of all ages and all levels took part in the annual event held early in the morning. The event surpassed its regular goal to reach more than 1,000 participants.











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Back to School

Looking ahead trends

Hot looks for when the weather cools down

by Allie Rivera Staff Writer



s summer starts to wind down, back-to-school shopping begins to ramp

According to a survey from the National Retail Federation, back-toschool spending in 2017 is expected to reach \$83.6 billion, a ten percent increase from last year's \$75.8 billion.

"It's the second biggest selling season for retails next to the holidays," Westfarms spokesperson Amanda Sirica said. "We will see a huge spike in back-to-school shopping during Connecticut's tax free week, which begins Sunday, August 20 through Saturday, August 26."

Along with sales of school supplies, electronics and shoes, back-toschool shopping often has a great emphasis on clothes.

"There's something very exciting and exhilarating about fall and a chance for kids to start fresh, and with that comes a fresh new wardrobe," Sirica said.

For those who may be daunted by all the styles in stores, here are some of the trends that will be making a splash this fall.

"Denim is always a staple of back to school shopping and this year is no exception," Sirica said. "It's actually bigger than ever."

For women and girls, many styles will now include embroidered denim as well as one of the bigger trends of the season - patches and

"For girls right now there is a lot of patches, and they're putting them everywhere," Susan Macko, owner of LemonLlama Kids' Boutique in Avon said. "They're on jeans as well as outerwear or tunics and tops."

The style of these patches can range from rainbows and butterflies to a variety of emojis, which both Macko and Sirica said are very popular this year.

Along with appliqued and embroidered denim, shoppers can also expect to see more high-waisted jeans in stores.

"You're also going to see colored denim making a comeback and high-waisted jeans," Sirica said.

Part of what is contributing to this style is a resurgence in trends from the 1970s.

"We're seeing a subtle '70s trend coming back," Sirica said. "Last year was the '80s and now we're seeing this subtle '70s revival. Some of the things we're seeing contribute to that are two-tone denim and body suits."

Along with that '70s style is the continuation of all things boho.

"Bohemian is still trending," Macko said. "That was strong last year and that's still around."

Macko and Sirica said shoppers can expect to see flowing dresses and tops for girls and women.

"Those styles look incredible paired with cargo or denim jackets," Sirica said.

Also continuing into the fall is a style known as 'athleisure,' which Sirica said is still "going strong."

"That's when you mix and match athletic wear with everyday wear," she explained. "You may have a performance Under Armour top with a denim skirt, or just wearing a full athletic outfit as everyday wear."

For many shoppers, the fabric used is an important part of any

"In general for the kids, it's all about the fabric and feel and the softness of it. That's why fleece is always so popular," Macko said.

As the days begin to grow colder, Macko said that this season will see a growing trend of fur, either faux or real, as well.

"We're seeing a lot of furtrimmed hoods and vests," she said. "There are fur pom-poms everywhere. Some of the fur is natural, some of it's dyed, but hats for infants through adults seem to have either real or faux fur pom-poms."

Another fabric choice Macko said is popular this season is metallic.

"In general, metallics are

popular, especially gold metallics," she said. "You'll probably see it in dresses and sweaters this season."

In addition to shoppers being concerned with a fabric's feel and look, many are also concerned with how it was made.

"Some of our retailers have started making eco-friendly lines," Sirica said. "They're coming out with clothes that are made from recycled materials, like bottles, and turned into textiles."

Companies such as H&M have started producing these environmentally conscious clothing as well as JCPenney's Arizona Jeans line, which now has nearly 28 percent of their textiles made from recycled materials.

For those who may be overwhelmed by the task of back-to-school shopping, both Macko and Sirica said that it can be a positive experience, both for shoppers and their wallets.

"It seems like a daunting task,

but it does not have to be," Sirica said. "Westfarms has parents covered with back to school sales, and you can see online or on our new app what's on sale before you head out to the mall."

Whether heading out to a large department store or staying small at a boutique, back-to-school shopping can be pleasant for everyone.

"We always have things that are different that you don't find everywhere," Macko said. "There are price points for everyone and we always have sale items. It's a nice mix so that everybody can find something." **WHL**

LemonLlama Kid's Boutique is located at 29 East Main Street, Avon. They can be reached at 860-678-7087 or online at www.lemonllamakids. com. Westfarms Mall is located at 1500 New Britain Avenue, West Hartford. For more information, call 860-561-3024 or visit www.shopwestfarms.com.



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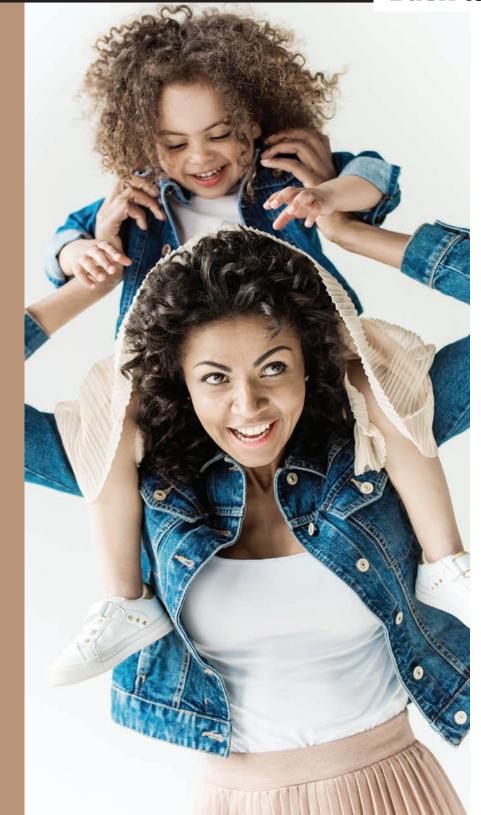
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Back to school style for everyone

Tips for moms and dads to take summer styles into fall

by Mara Dresner *Staff write*

ven if it's been quite a while since you've seen the inside of a classroom, back-to-school is still often the cue to begin thinking about your fall wardrobe.

However, with such a short summer season, many of us are understandably reluctant to put our summer clothes away too soon.

"Transitioning from summer to fall is not really that hard. Other than a perhaps a color change, it's the same as having a chilly summer night when we take out a lightweight sweater or put on a pair of jeans to warm us up," Jan Horahan, owner of Jan's on Main in Glastonbury, said. "The colors get a bit darker and the fabrics are a tad bit heavier. That's not to say though that you can't layer some of our favorite summer pieces with our heavier fall clothing. A lightweight ruffled sleeveless top looks great under a denim jacket or a black sweater or blazer."

Karen Herbert, who is co-owner with Barbara Karsky of BK&CO in West Hartford, said that this is a

great time of year to experiment.

"Traditional seasons can be the most challenging clothing times. However, we like to think of those seasons in New England as the time to be the most creative with your wardrobe. It is always about color, extending summer into fall or winter into spring. Your favorite black pant can be season-less when the top changes. Also, adding a scarf can change the season of an outfit," she recommended. "We love to layer - and that means wearing different lengths together. Topping a sheer sleeve under a sleeveless tunic and then adding a cropped cardigan gives you a great multi-layer, multi-color look. When you throw on a wrap or a scarf, it adds warmth, and again color that changes an outfit. Mixing patterns within the same color hue gives an interesting forward look, but not everyone is that adventurous. When it is done tastefully people will be envious that they didn't have the courage to try it!"

Barbara Capenera, who founded Uptown Consignment with three





locations including one in Rocky Hill, is also all about taking style chances.

"You can't go wrong adding a cardigan and a closed-toe shoe to any summer outfit as the fall weather starts. One of my favorite things to do is add a solid tight to a pair of shorts, and a solid blazer to a short-sleeve top with a flat, closed-toe textured shoe. I always liked the simplicity of layering solid pieces with one piece having a texture, like your shoes or a handbag especially as the season is just starting. Leopard print is my favorite. Turns out it is trending this fall," Capenera said.

Don't get hung up on old rules, such as "No white after Labor Day."

"The fabulous white jean is very European. I know people in the Northeast shy away from white in the fall and winter, and unless it is the jean we do too. However, not until end of October if it is a beautiful warm fall," Herbert said.

Capenera is also a fan of taking white into the cooler weather.

"I love white! As long as you stay away from striped pieces which tend to look very summery, I think you can wear white. One of my favorite looks is white jeans with a black crewneck sweater and a suede boot or flat. It's simple and classic. You can also soften the look of white by adding earth tones and smaller pieces of wood jewelry with a soft, light suede-colored bag," she said. "The only thing I would not do, but this is me, is wear white linen in the fall. The material is designed for warm climates, keeping you cooler in the summer, so it is not made to wear in cooler weather."

Horahan suggested pairing white jeans with a short bootie to take the look into fall weather.

She also finds dresses a flexible choice with the changeable weather.

"Dresses are usually an easy piece to transition and layer under a sweater or jacket and most are pretty versatile," Horahan said.

Despite warm days, evenings often start to cool off quickly, and it pays to be prepared.

"In the evening during the summer I always add a light cardigan or a simple solid blazer to all my summer outfits. If the evening starts out warm, I just roll up a solid colored shawl to keep in my bag if I need it," Capenera said.

"The wrap is the life-saver when it comes to the drop in temperature. We always suggest a wrap, especially when traveling. I never leave the house without a wrap of some sort," Herbert said.

"A beautiful wrap completes an outfit and is functional. Many women are uncomfortable of the wrap. It just takes a quick lesson on how to use one to your advantage and you can be free from carrying a 'topper' around all day in the heat."

Of course, fashionistas have their eye on fall styles, even as they wring every moment out of summer.

Capenera is excited about vintage style coats and faux fur hats this season.

"There are really no fashion rules. The greatest thing about fashion today is that you can wear whatever you want and create your own style," she said. "You can be any age and wear a leather motorcycle jacket with a long skirt and t-shirt and look cool. You can be young and dress classic or older and dress hip. Today's fashion is being yourself and you are in style." WHL

Learn more at uptownconsignment.com, jansonmain.com or bkcostyle.com.











ith the start of school comes a brand new chapter for many young people who are moving out of their family homes and into a dormitory.

For those looking to spruce up the small space beyond the standard issue dresser and twin bed, local retailers have a variety of options.

"As far as college students going back to school, we have all types of

items in our store," Sheri Jackson, owner of Gillette Furniture Consignment in Wethersfield, said.

Those preparing to live in a small space should think about finding items that make good use of an area.

"We have a Crate and Barrel ladder shelf that's something that, if you don't have a lot of room, is a nice piece," Jackson said.

To best utilize space, students can look for under bed storage, however





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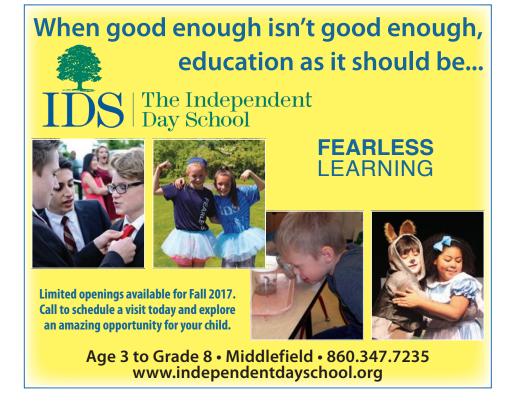
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Jackson also suggested finding pieces that can do double duty.

"They can get something like a storage ottoman so they can use it both for storage and as a coffee table," Jackson said.

Students can also find pieces that can fold away or be hidden when not in use. "If they're doing a small apartment, we have a two-seater drop side table," Jackson said. "They can pull up the sides and use their laptop or eat on it with a friend."

By shopping consignment, students may be able to find unique items that will make their dorm room stand out. According to Jackson, shopping for dorms at a consignment store, such as Gillette Furniture Consignment, is also ideal for those not looking to break the bank.

"We offer quality, condition and style and I try to have something to hit everybody's price point," Jackson said. "This isn't just old, used furniture. This is quality items at a good price."

At her store, much like for many young people, remaining eco-friendly is a priority.

"We're very earth-friendly," she

said. "We're always being conscientious and recycling."

Along with furnishing dorm rooms with shelves and extra storage space, being away from home also gives students the opportunity to decorate however they wish.

"We get a lot of kids coming in here to decorate their dorms," Geraldine Talge, owner of The Chalkboard in West Hartford, said. "They'll usually have a theme going on that they want to do."

While The Chalkboard is typically thought of as a teacher supply store, Talge said that each fall she gets an influx of college students who find creative ways to repurpose the items they find.

One of the biggest sellers she finds for college-bound students are decorative papers and boarders.

"It makes whatever you're putting up look so nice," Talge said. "They do a lot with decorating dorms."

Early in the year, Talge said she sees many students looking to create welcome signs and banners, but as the year progresses, students will return to create new themes for different holidays or celebrations.

"We do sell a lot of inspirational posters as well," Talge said.

For those looking to use this change of scenery as a way to get organized, The Chalkboard also offers a variety of items to make desk space clean and efficient with folders, notebooks and shelf organizers.

"The first thing I would suggest is a calendar," Talge said. "That's always a great thing to have to stay on top of everything."

When moving into a new space, especially a tiny room, it's important $% \left(x\right) =\left(x\right) +\left(x\right) +\left($ to think creatively to best utilize the space, but additionally it's also important to simply enjoy the new adventure.

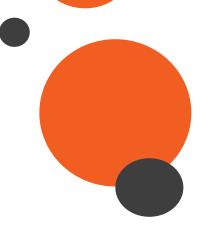
"It's just fun when the kids come in because they're always enthusiastic," Talge said. WHL

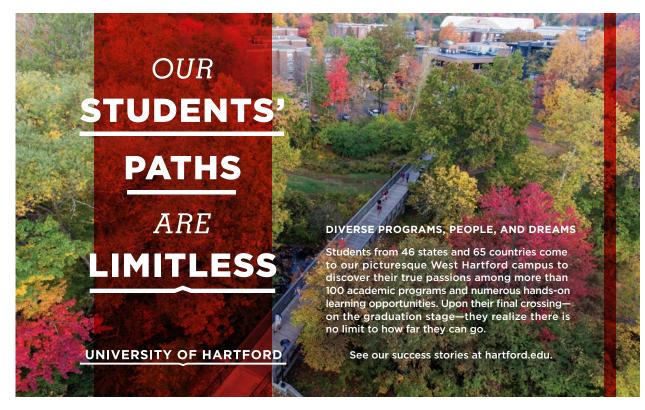
Gillette Furniture Consignment is located at 32 Silas Deane Highway, Wethersfield. They can be reached at 860-436-4663 or online at www.gillettefurnitureconsignment.com.

The Chalkboard is located at 1126 New Britain Ave., West Hartford. They can be reached at 860-236-0044 or online at www.chalkboardct.com.

"The first thing I would suggest is a calendar. That's always a great thing to have to stay on top of everything."

-Geraldine Talge











Care packages

Nothing says 'I love you' like a box of goodies

by Lynn Woike LIFE Staff

are packages from home are coveted by students away at school. They bring a taste of home along with some comfort.

"The ideal care package definitely contains something sweet: photographs from home or a letter from a friend or family member are definitely great additions to any care package. Also, something that is actually sweet, like chocolate or cookies that can be shared with friends and roommates are always welcome too," said Olivia Piper of Avon, who recently graduated.

If you can't make it yourself, there

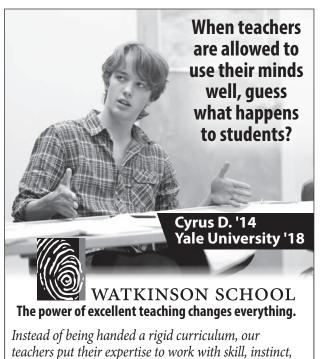
are many places that can pamper your child to your specifications.

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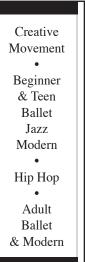
Mothers often send them after the student is settled in, when finals or something big approaches, for holidays and birthdays, said owner Julie Zadjura.

Favorite and themed foods are common choices.

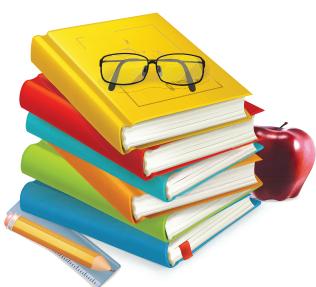
Because she has a food handler license, Zadjura will shop for everything from bakery goods and nutri-













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autonomy makes for a dramatic boost in student

tious snacks to junk food.

"Definitely comfort foods," she said are popular items, along with seasonal products, and recipients are always happy to receive the packages she delivers.

Whole Foods Market can get goodies to college campuses through its Pantry Perfection baskets with a variety of themes such as Good For You Goodies, The Pantry Pleaser and Snack Attack Basket. Custom gift baskets can also be ordered that contain any product available in the store. Kosher, gluten-free, vegetarian, vegan and other special diets can be accommodated. Local delivery is available, with rates and times dependent on location. The market's website will get you to this option.

Another option, said Brie George, associate store team leader at the West Hartford store on Raymond Road, is the Instacart app. It allows you to place an order for any item in the store - from bakery and bulk goods to deli, dairy and more - and have it delivered locally or made ready for pick up.

"A lot more healthy snacks are popular with young people," she said.

These include jerky, paleo foods, low-sugar choices, trail mixes, nuts and grain-free items.

"Any kind of protein or energy bars are popular," she said, adding

that young people are leaning toward any kind of gluten-free or grain-free chips, along with probiotics.

"Caffeinated energy drinks are hugely popular, and the natural energy drinks that we carry."

Stew Leonards currently offers gift baskets that include a gallon of brownies, a healthy snacks selection, a bucket with three kinds of popped corn, or a choice of coffee cakes. More options are available when the weather is cooler.

Care packages can be customized, but because they are shipped from a production facility, only items shown are available. For instance, because pistachios are available in one of the baskets, ground coffee is in another, and cheese and fruit are in a third, those items can be combined into a special order.

What's offered depends on the season – with many perishable items not available to ship during the heat of summer. During holiday seasons, customizing is not available.

Most colleges are affiliated with a company offering care packages.

The Care Package Program at the University of Connecticut is run by Our Campus Market, which services more than 1,000 universities, said Pat, a customer service spokesperson at the Pennsylvania-based company.

Parents can choose from a variety

of online options such as an assortment of snacks, treats and drinks, or a Halloween-themed package.

Food, however, is not the only option, she said.

Bedding packages, for instance, come in 11 choices and are guaranteed until graduation. Trash cans, rugs, appliances, pillows, mirrors, storage options and just about anything a student needs can be ordered.

Normally, she said, parents will send something in the fall to help their child settle in and again in the spring before finals. Birthdays also frequently prompt sending packages - some complete with cupcakes.

In many instances, orders can be customized for such things as special diets and allergies, Sue said.

At the University of Hartford's online Campus Store, 42 different care packages are available. There is one that comes with a knit beanie, lip balm, hand warmers, instant soups and oatmeal, and hot cocoa and another that is full of healthy soups and teas. A collection of 50 snacks and treats is another option likely to be popular.

When it comes to packing up goodies to send to children away at school, Mark Coppolelli, owner of the UPS stores in Cromwell and Wethersfield, suggested that items be placed securely in airtight decorative

tins or disposable plasticware.

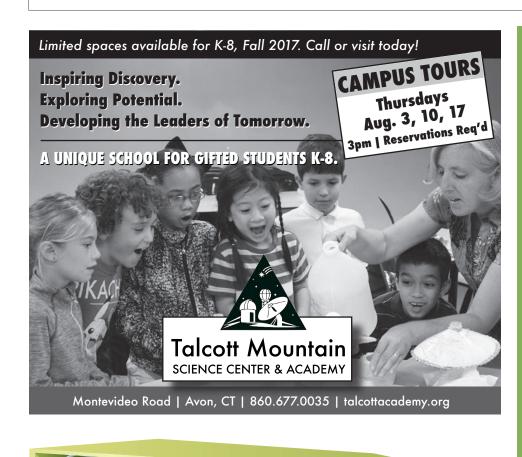
"Ensure baked goods are cool before packing. When shipping multiple items, pack the heaviest ones on the bottom and ensure all items are tightly sealed. Never leave air pockets in containers; fill gaps with air-filled wrap so the goodies look as good on arrival as they did when they left the oven," he said, offering this hint, "An empty Pringles can makes a good cookie cutter and storage container."

Pack items in a new corrugated box and never use string or wrap it in kraft paper. Provide at least two inches of cushioning on all sides using appropriate packaging techniques and materials, such as bubble cushioning, polystyrene peanuts, corrugated dividers or plastic foam - paper will not hold its shape during transit.

"UPS Store franchisees receive specialized training so we can handle any packing challenge," Coppolelli said.

According to a survey conducted by The UPS Store, once the excitement of independence wears off, 67 percent of college students find what they want most is a taste of home delivered to their mailbox.

"Be the dorm favorite – more than 70 percent of students surveyed wanted to share their care packages with friends and roommates, so pack enough to go around," he added. WHL







they serve, Revival Home found itself in one of those situations where there simply was not enough room. They had already expanded the store five years ago and still they needed more space.

It might be easy for a homeowner to haul some unused piece of furniture up to the attic or put it in storage, but for the consignment home furniture and décor shop, that was not an option. So the next best thing was to move.

Owners Sean and Arlene Carr found the perfect spot in the Home Design District in town and were scheduled to host a grand opening July 24.

The couple looked throughout the state and decided to stay in West Hartford.

"We loved our clients here," Sean said.

The new space at 588 New Park Avenue is larger, enables them to display items in one large space rather than in two smaller storefronts and has on-site parking. The space is also surrounded by other homerelated businesses and they felt they would fit right in with the existing options there.

"It's probably the biggest space in West Hartford where we could do ness," Sean said.

They are also relocating at a great time with the installation of the busway and the opening of the brewery and food truck park, all of which will bring in people to the area.

Once the new lease was signed the couple slowly began to move items from their South Main Street location to their new space.

The couple lives in Glastonbury. Their backgrounds are in retail, finance and art direction. Both had worked at Filene's and that is where they met. When Sean lost his job through a merger, he happened to read an article about the dawn of eBay. According to what he read, executives who were out of work, like himself, were turning to this new-at-the-time online sales website to earn a living. He decided to try it.

The one downside was that he could not sell larger items and soon he and his wife turned their thoughts to opening a store. Sean had his eye on the empty space left by Daswani, a men's clothing store.

"It was a great spot for us,"

Their online business has continued along with the shop that is

full of gently used furniture, from lamps and tables to credenzas and artwork and more.

The consignment shop gets its inventory from estate sales and from people looking to sell their own items, some of which they may have inherited. A client can send a photo and receive an estimate on what Revival Home could sell the item for in its store or online avenues. They offer a four-month consignment, after which time, if the item has not sold it goes to auction, if it does not sell there it will be donated. Revival Home takes 50 percent of the sale price and works with a moving company to bring items to customers' homes. They also work with a leather repair specialist and an upholsterer.

While the business is located in West Hartford, they have sold items to interested customers around the country.

"We sell everywhere; you have to be online to survive," Arlene said.

When the couple opened their business, their goal was to create a high-end consignment shop for furniture and home décor. Using their art-related backgrounds, they arranged small vignettes

ty items at a good price and have no qualms about purchasing a used

"A lot of the older pieces we have are better made than what is coming out new in furniture stores," Arlene said.

piece.

Many younger people these days, she said, are not interested in owning or maintaining fine china or silver.

There is a market, however, for people who do.

"My kids don't want it," is something Sean said he hears often from clients looking to sell their finer pieces.

Something like silver can be sold in a week, he said, adding Herend china is also very popular right now.

Also in demand is anything mid-century modern.

"It's so hot right now," Arlene said, adding that mahogany pieces are also selling well and leather continues to attract customers.

Customers, Sean said, are looking for a one-of-a-kind piece or something special that others may not have.

"The quality is the most important thing," Sean said.

Furniture shopping can be a seasonal endeavor, Revival Home



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News roundup

Committee considers

incentive-based zoning standards

The Town Council is planning to entertain an ordinance in the coming months to create new incentive-based zoning standards for the Central Business zone.

The Council's Community Planning and Community Services Committee reviewed a draft of the ordinance July 18 - the latest step in a process to foster development in West Hartford Center that is consistent with resident interests.

Last month, the Town Council formally adopted a Vision Statement and Guiding Principles for the Central Business zoning district for the Center to be considered by the governing body when evaluating future development in the BC zone, and to be shared with BC zone property owners considering redevelopment or new investments.

It was the conclusion of a lengthy public outreach process that began after the failure of two measures before the Town Council to increase the allowed floor area ratio for developments in the zone.

The ordinance that the committee reviewed recently would make no changes to the underlying maximum in the FAR allowance, but would give developers an opportunity in an Special Development District application to ask for an FAR bonus for specific types of development as a means of incentivizing growth to "derive some public benefit or good," Town Planner Todd Dumais explained.

"It is believed that some targeted incremental intensification of development can be accomplished in West Hartford Center without negatively impacting surrounding residential neighborhoods, provided that it is done appropriately," the draft ordinance reads.

One thing the ordinance looks to incentivize is affordable housing development. Per the draft, the number of units in such a development that are designated as affordable can be excluded in determining the maximum number of units permitted on a lot.

"In no case, however, shall the

total of all dwelling units provided exceed 115 percent of that allowed in the district," it explains.

For example, Dumais said, with the maximum of 43 residential units per acre, "What we're saying is you can build an additional 6 on top of that if 15 percent [of the development] is affordable."

Infill developments are another type of development the town is hoping to attract. To do so, the ordinance would allow the floor area of the ground floor to be excluded in determining maximum FAR.

"We have more interrupted space within our Center of a non-activated or attractive street front than other communities, particularly on LaSalle Road and Farmington Avenue east of the Center," Dumais said. "We're trying to incentivize building out an attractive street wall ... so we're not interrupted by broad expanses of parking lots."

Corporation Counsel Pat Alair noted, however, "If you can't park it, you can't build it," meaning any infill development would have to meet parking requirements within its SDD, so a building could not be put over an existing parking lot without sufficient spaces remaining.

With regard to parking, the ordinance would exclude the floor area of any private parking garage providing dedicated parking spaces for the use of residential or commercial occupants of the lot and/or invitees from determining maximum FAR, provided the parking garage is fully enclosed by landscaping, architectural screening, active commercial or residential spaces, and that it is located on the first story above finished grade or below ground.

Other incentives aim to attract historic preservation developments by excluding each square foot of floor area preserved within a historic building structure from determining maximum FAR, and to encourage public open space by excluding two square feet of floor area ratio in determining maximum FAR for each square foot of public open space provided.

The ordinance would also exclude 10 square feet of floor area from determining maximum FAR for each \$1,000 of installed cost of public art.

In all cases, in order for the FAR exclusion to be allowed, the Council would have to determine when considering the SDD application that "the development is of a contextually sensitive design and appropriate scale, that adequate parking exists to meet the demand of the existing and proposed development, that the development is in harmony with the open feeling and presence of natural light within the public realm of the district."

It would also have to find there is "dequate street capacity to accommodate the traffic projected to result from any increased intensity of use, and "that appropriate bicycle and pedestrian amenities, such as but not limited to bicycle storage and/or parking, park benches and pedestrian walkways are provided," the draft of the ordinance details.

The goal is to put the ordinance on an early September Town Council agenda so it can be set for public hearing.

Streets will make way for cyclists, pedestrians

Bike West Hartford Inc. will host the second annual West Hartford CenterStreets next month. The event, which will take place Sunday, August 27 from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. in a loop of West Hartford Center closed to car traffic so residents can walk, bike and enjoy the pedestrian environment, will also include a bike swap and a bike rodeo run by the West Hartford Police Department. Bike registration, food and entertainment will also be part of the activities.

The event was held for the first time last year to, according to organizers, demonstrate the support that exists in town for bicycling as a transportation and recreational option, to create an environment for safe, fun, community-centered exercise, to demonstrate to local businesses that bicyclists make good customers, and to build community spirit.

"When I was a kid there was a dead end at the end of our road, and that's where all the activity would happen," Scott Franklin, chair of the town's Pedestrian and Bicycle Commission said before last year's event. "To be able to close down the street and walk in the middle of Main Street, that's an amazing thing."

Bike West Hartford, Inc. is a nonprofit organization that advocates for bicycle-friendly policies and programs in town. It and the commission have devoted the last several years to making changes in West Hartford. The town was designated a bronze level Bicycle Friendly Community by the League of American Bicyclists in 2015 and the town adopted a Complete Streets Policy two years ago to support improvements toward developing a road network that accommodates all road users.

Visit bikewesthartford.org for an updated schedule of rides. Email info@bikewesthartford.org with questions.

Police, fire department members honored

Members of West Hartford's fire and police departments were recognized on the state level in early July for their efforts in public safety.

Police Officer Brandon Dudzinski and Firefighter Brendan Coen were honored as the 2017 Police Officer of the Year and Firefighter of the Year by the Connecticut Department of the American Legion.

The pair was honored at the Legion's 99th annual convention held July 6-8.

Dudzinski was named this year's West Hartford officer of the year by Hayes-Velhage Post 96 in April.

He has been with the WHPD since 2008, during which time he worked in patrol before his current assignment in the Community Interaction Team. He is a department field training officer and a member of the Emergency Service Unit.

Coen was named a West Hartford Firefighter of the Year by Post 96 last October. The honor was bestowed as a result of his efforts to save the lives of two victims of a motor vehicle crash on Christmas Day, 2015.

The day of the accident, he was driving in Bolton after a shift in West Hartford to his part-time job as a dispatcher. He came upon a twocar accident on Route 6 - one vehicle had flipped and the passenger inside was deceased, while the other was upright and on fire with two passengers trapped inside.

Both victims were treated at the hospital and later released.

"With the increased workload and responsibilities placed on the

Fire Department since starting the paramedic program a year ago, all members of the department have stepped up and shined in their respective roles, so being recognized among my peers is an incredible honor," Coen said. "But the greatest reward is when we see the positive outcome of the residents and visitors of West Hartford who we serve daily."

Dudzinski also said the recognition belongs to all those in his department.

"With everything going on and the tough job that we deal with it's nice to be recognized," he said. "I'm given the opportunity to do what I do every day because of the amazing people, the men and women, that I get to work with."

Community servant recognized

Ronit Shoham believes in helping others. Numerous endeavors on her part have stemmed from that belief over the years, and in recognition of her efforts Leadership Greater Hartford will honor her with the Polaris Award this fall.

Shoham will be one of four recipients of the award at an annual gala held at The Bushnell Center for Performing Arts. The award recognizes individuals "for their vision, skill, and courage in serving the Greater Hartford community and for being guiding lights for others to follow, especially during these difficult and turbulent times," according to a press release.

As a founder of the West Hartford Little League, it's Challenger Division and the Miracle League of Connecticut and the Miracle Field, which allows children with physical and mental challenges to play baseball, Shoham, who is described as a "whirlwind of activity," is also a driving force behind Jonathan's Dream Re-Imagined the ongoing initiative to rebuild one of America's first inclusive, accessible playgrounds on the grounds of the Mandell JCC - and The Underground, which is a safe location for teenagers to gather.

In 2013, she founded Cut Out Cancer, a nonprofit that provides free salon and spa treatments to cancer patients once a month.

Over the years she has served as a volunteer for the Hartford Jewish Coalition for Literacy and Loaves and Fishes Soup Kitchen, and as a board member for Beth-El Temple



West Hartford resident Ronit Shoham will be one of four recipients of the Leadership Greater Hartford Polaris Award this fall. She will be honored for her efforts to better the Greater Hartford community through a variety of volunteer activities.

and Community of Concern. She has led numerous fundraising initiatives and otherwise worked to benefit a variety of areas of the community.

For Shoham, all of her volunteer activities have had an impact on her own life.

"I guess if I look at my heart as a pie, they're all a piece of the pie that makes up my heart. They all are special to me in a different way. They're all part of who I am and make who I am," she said.

Shoham received the Noah Webster Award from the West Hartford Chamber of Commerce in 2008 and the Stars for Kids Award – Mayor's Award from the West Hartford Kiwanis Club, chosen by Mayor Scott Slifka, in 2015.

Shoham came to America in 1982. Prior to her arrival, she worked as a social worker in the Israeli Army. Once in Connecticut, she earned two bachelors degrees from Central Connecticut State University and a Master of Science in reading and language.

The Polaris Awards Gala is set for Oct. 18 at 5:30 p.m. For more information, visit leadershipgh.org.

"I really feel very humbled. I feel very honored. I feel very grateful," Shoham said of the award. "I never stop to think why I do what I do, I just do it. It feels good because you get a lot more when you give."

Grants received

The West Hartford Fire Department received a FEMA Assistance to Firefighters Grant totaling \$551,194 June 23.

According to a statement from Fire Chief Gary Allyn, "The money will be used to replace all 53 of the department's self-contained breathing apparatus, the air compressor at Station 2, and training on the apparatus, including the fall live fire training at the Connecticut Fire Academy."

The current SCBAs and air compressor are more than 20 years.

Leon Davidoff, deputy mayor and chair of the Town Council's Public Safety Committee, praised town administrative staff responsible securing the funds.

"Our firefighters bravely serve our community and it is essential that they have the necessary safety equipment to perform their duties and to stay compliant with national standards," he said in a statement. "Additionally, as a result of this generous federal grant, the Town Council will not have to appropriate local tax dollars for these self-contained breathing apparatus units."

West Hartford was one of four towns in Connecticut to receive the funding, along with Fairfield, which received \$100,717, Ledyard, which received \$242,096, and New Milford, which received \$45,455.

Potential UConn purchase due diligence date extended again

The outside due diligence date for the town of West Hartford to evaluate the University of Connecticut site it plans to purchase was extended again at the end of June.

The town first entered a purchase and sale agreement for the sale of the UConn campus at the corner of Asylum Avenue and Trout Brook Drive in July of last year. Under that agreement, the town began conducting environmental and other inspections with an initial close to that due diligence period set for October 12, 2016. That date has since been extended multiple times as town inspections found areas of concern due to PCBs found in some buildings and soil.

The debate about whether or not the town should purchase the site at all began more than a year ago, when the university was engaged in discussions with a third-party purchaser. Ultimately, the town negotiated a \$5 million purchase price and entered the purchase and sale agreement

Town Manager Ron Van Winkle advised the Town Council in February that, due to fiscal pressure brought on by the state budget and significant cuts contained within it in funding to municipalities, the time may not have been right for the town to buy the parcel for that amount.

In May, the Town Council voted on party lines to amend the agreement and authorize the town manager to offer the university \$1 million for the site. Democrats favored the revision and Republicans opposed it, ultimately voting 5-3 on the motion after a lengthy discussion.

The new price was negotiated following the discovery of the PCBs and the resulting estimated \$420,000 in remediation costs required for the 58-acre parcel and the five buildings on site.

The town has already made a \$250,000 deposit on the site that is non-refundable, so the remaining balance of purchase cost will be \$750,000 – an amount the town has already set aside in its Capital Non-Recurring Expenditure account for an expected next payment at the end of the due diligence period – and the town has invested an additional \$180,000 for its site investigation.

The due-diligence period for the purchase – tentatively set to close in October when the university intends to relocate its campus to downtown Hartford – was supposed to end in March, at which time the contract would have been voided. The town asked the university for an extension until two weeks after the state budget adoption, but told UConn it should feel free to seek another buyer.

In response, Richard Orr, vice president and general counsel for UConn, offered to extend the outside diligence date to May 1. It was then again extended to May 19 and, subsequently, to June 23. The new due diligence date is September 15.

The purchase will have to come back to the Town Council in the future for final approval, and funds for the transaction will need to be appropriated. Even though the town currently has the \$750,000 set aside in CNRE, bonding will also be considered as a an option for the payment.

Once the town does own the property, if the sale is completed, public meetings will be held in the process to determine a future use for the site. **WHL**

This is a compilation of news that appeared over the last month in our sister publication The West Hartford Press. To read news weekly, pick up a copy of visit turleyct.com to request home delivery of the paper.

Where to FIND IT



Dressing up a dresser

This Art Deco dresser with a waterfall front has had some special touches added to it, including brass handles and a backlight. The piece dates back to the 1930s or '40s and has been painted in jadeite green chalk paint with a wax finish. This fun piece, and many others like it, can be found at Blaze and Bloom, 485 New Park Avenue. For more information call 860-930-5889 or email blaze. bloom@yahoo.com.



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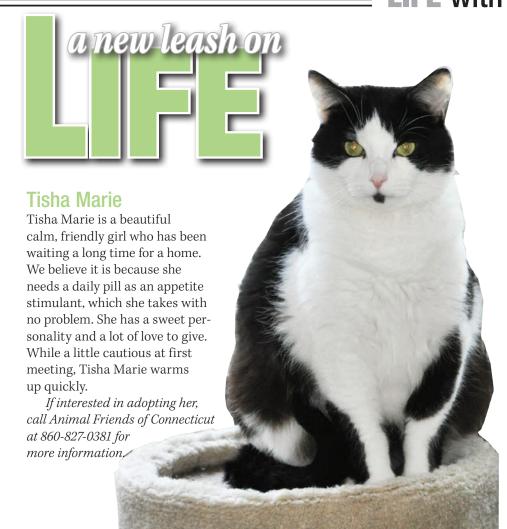
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The residential space includes a mix of differently sized studio, one bedroom, and two bedroom apartments with rents starting at \$886 - \$1122 with heat and hot water included in the rents. The property offers spacious unique floor plans, fully-applianced kitchens, on-site laundry facilities, fitness room, central air, accessible units, community room and Historic Mill Exhibition.

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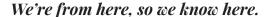
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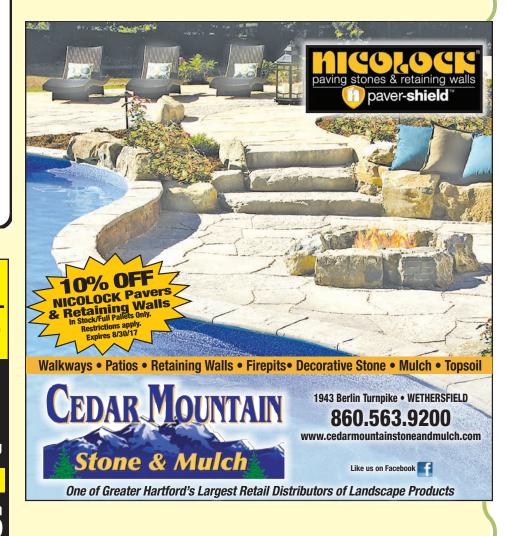
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Writer's Block

Cruising

by Lynn Woike *Editor*

mourn the death of the Sunday drive. As a child, we'd all pile into the car that had no seat belts and no air conditioning. It did, however, have an AM radio, a cigarette lighter, vent windows and vinyl seats that would burn the back of your legs on a hot summer day. We'd visit state parks and friends of my parents. Dad did the driving. Mom packed sandwiches and fruit for lunch. If we were lucky, somewhere along the way there'd be an ice cream stand. Soft serve was my favorite. Dipped in chocolate that made a hard shell.

The first car I bought was a 10-year-old green VW Beetle. I found every excuse to drive it, eagerly taking the roads less traveled.

But most of the meandering drives I took in high school were with my boyfriend. I'd sit next to him on the bench seat, and if he put his arm around me, I'd shift for him, whether it was on the column or the floor. We drove,

listening to music on the eight-track player or the FM radio and talking. We'd stop for grinders and soda and cigarettes. Sometimes we'd park.

When I first met the man I married, we'd take long Sunday drives in his MGB, aimlessly stopping at antique stores, which were one of the few places open, and waterfalls – maybe a hot dog stand. That's when I came to both love and hate convertibles enough to get my own for the last few years before children.

My goal then was to try to get lost in a town that I knew by turning down every unfamiliar road. But more than on Sundays, I loved driving at night under a full moon with the top down along roads with no streetlights.

Then along came the gas shortages, the rationing, and the buying on even and odd days based on your license plate. We all became energy conscious, combining multiple errands and plotting the shortest route. I think that's when the Sunday drive died.

I miss them.

The last aimless drive I took was May 31, 2016. And before that, it was September 1, 2015. Both times I was on vacation. Both times I didn't

have a destination to reach or a schedule to keep. I also didn't have a map, only the GPS tucked under the seat so I could find my way back when I was ready.

They seemed self-indulgent and I tried not to think about miles per gallon or the effect burning fossil fuel was having on the ozone layer. It felt strange, too, because it lacked a soundtrack from the first half of the '70s. I longed for a CD with songs like "Stairway to Heaven," "Best of My Love," "Heart of Gold," "American Pie" and "Time In a Bottle."

The quiet gave me time to just focus on the road in open country, and not think about all that was waiting for me to do when I returned. It was meditative. I was in a world of my own with little oddities and wonders to discover.

Now when I'm behind the wheel, I'm mostly in a hurry to get somewhere. I'm less likely to take the scenic route.

When I retire, that will change. The road is calling me. I long to turn a school bus into my home and, as Willie Nelson sings, start "Goin' places that I've never been / Seein' things that I may never see again." WHL

Letter to the Editor

Thanking firefighters To the editor:

I would like to publicly express my deep gratitude to the West Hartford Firefighters Local 1241 for their incredible help to me with my annual fundraiser for St. Francis Hospital.

Starting in 2008 as a grateful cancer patient's way to give back to the hospital which saved my life, our fundraiser has grown each year to well over 100 guests in our backyard.

About seven years ago, the West Hartford firefighters offered to cook for our event – and their cooking has been phenomenal.

I cannot express enough thanks to the great members of Local 1241 who truly make our events such a great success each year. Our guests look forward to their delicious menu, presented with a warm and friendly attitude. They are an incredible group and I am forever indebted to them.

Under the organizational and culinary talents of fire-fighter Jason Powell, Lt. Adam Pacheco and Local 1241 President Kerry Warren, this year's even on June 12 was a huge success, raising over \$17,000 – in no small part due to the West Hartford firefighters.

Their community spirit is amazing.

-Barbara Gordon Wood Pond Road

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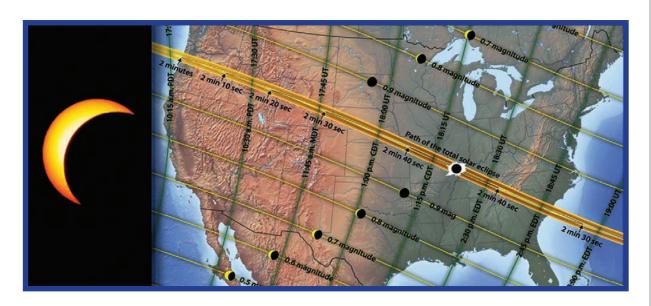
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BY MARK DIXON WFSB METEOROLOGIST [AMS]



Solar Eclipse Time!

his month marks the first Total Solar Eclipse since 1979, for the contiguous United States. What is it, and what do you need to know? ...here are the details:

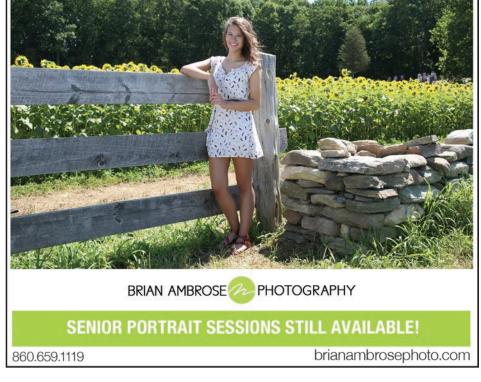
The event is happening on Monday, August 21st. As seen in the graphic, those from Oregon to South Carolina will be in the

path of totality (a path roughly 70 miles wide). This is where the moon passes directly between the sun and Earth, entirely blocking the sun for a matter of minutes at the same time, casting the moon's shadow on Earth. The longest duration of the total eclipse is approximately 2 minutes and 40 seconds, when passing over Illinois!

Here in Connecticut, we will not see a "total" eclipse, but a "partial" one. This means the moon will only partially block the sun. On the 21st, for viewing from the Nutmeg State, the partial eclipse will begin around 1:25 p.m., reach its maximum point at 2:45 p.m. then end around 4 p.m. (lasting 2.5 hours, from start to finish).

Viewing will be weather permitting, of course. Furthermore, if visible, you will want to do so safely. Do NOT look directly at the eclipse. Using traditional sunglasses won't suffice, even if they're very dark. Instead, you will need special "eclipse glasses" that utilize a special-purpose solar filter. WHL





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